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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7468  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
RUEABND/DEA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 BRIDGETOWN 000339

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/CAR AND INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR KCRM ECON PGOV XL

SUBJECT: Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean: May 2009 NAS Update

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SUMMARY  
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**¶1.** (SBU) The island nations that make up Embassy Bridgetown's area of responsibility - Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines continue to see a steady increase in the volume of narcotics destined for and transshipped through the region. As a result of the impact of Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative, drugs destined for both North American and European markets have begun to flow through the Caribbean at greater levels. Local law enforcement continues to be under-resourced and plagued with antiquated legal codes and corruption in the ranks. Additional resources, to include a functional regional maritime entity, expanded training, and a robust integrity (vetting) program will be required to gain ground and momentum in the fight against narco-traffickers along the U.S. Third Border. Following is a summary of recent law enforcement and counter-narcotics activity and training in Embassy Barbados' AOR. End Summary.

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RECENT ENFORCEMENT SUCCESSES  
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**¶2.** (SBU) The following is a snapshot of recent narcotic enforcement/seizures in the region:

BARBADOS:

-- 3/9/2009: Police seized 1684 pounds of marijuana delivered from St. Vincent via vessel following off-load to a beach on the east coast of Barbados. The vessel is believed to have returned to St. Vincent (no air/marine assets available to monitor) and the beach off load crew escaped when police moved in (no arrests).

-- 4/2/2009: An arriving passenger from Guyana was arrested on arrival at the Barbados Airport in possession of 3.62 kilograms of cocaine. The passenger had been interviewed by Police on arrival and turned over to Customs for further inspection and the discovery of the drugs.

-- 4/4/2009: Approximately 990 pounds of marijuana was seized off the west coast of Barbados. The marijuana had been transported via go fast vessel from St. Vincent. There were no arrests made regarding this seizure.

-- 4/6/2009: Approximately 500 pounds of marijuana was seized off the east coast of Barbados. The marijuana had been transported via go fast vessel from St. Vincent and no arrests were made regarding this seizure.

ST. LUCIA:

-- 12/31/2008: St. Lucia Police arrested 3 persons pursuant to a traffic stop and seized 86 kilograms of marijuana and a loaded handgun. The Bridgetown DEA office assisted police in the follow-up

investigation and exploitation of intelligence obtained.

-- 1/30/2009: Two passengers were arrested on arrival at the St. Lucia Airport in possession of 1,975 grams of cocaine concealed on their person. The passengers were booked on to a connection flight to England.

-- 3/1/2009: St. Lucia Police arrested two persons after they attempted to export 4 kilograms of cocaine concealed in a box of plantains. The shipment was bound for Ontario, Canada.

-- 3/17/2009: A joint search warrant operation comprising personnel from the St. Lucia Police Drug Squad, Criminal Investigation Department, Central Intelligence Unit and Special Branch resulted in the arrest of two individuals and seizure of a handgun, \$178,700 Eastern Caribbean (EC) and \$14,940 in USC.

-- 5/5/2009: Eight persons were indicted by a federal grand jury in New Jersey pursuant to a joint investigation by DEA/ICE New Jersey airport group following the arrest of two drug couriers by British Customs at London's Heathrow Airport upon arrival from JFK airport. The investigation by Bridgetown DEA and St. Lucia Police determined that a Jamaican courier organization recruited persons from NY/NJ to fly to Jamaica and/or St. Lucia where they were provided with luggage containing kilogram quantities of cocaine to transport to the U.S. and ultimately to Great Britain and Canada. As a result of the investigation it was determined that 3 of the 8 persons indicted were based in St. Lucia.

DOMINICA:

-- 1/1/2009: Based on a joint Bridgetown DEA, British Serious BRIDGETOWN 00000339 002 OF 004

Organized Crime Agency (SOCA) and Dominica Drug Squad, BVI Customs maritime intercepted a vessel and arrested two crew members pursuant to the seizure of 56 kilograms of cocaine received from Dominica.

-- 1/19/2009: Local DEA office coordinated an investigation with Dominica Police regarding a Chinese National with Dominican passport travelling to Puerto Rico with a large sum of cash. As a result, a total of \$31,322.45 was seized on arrival in Puerto Rico based on the failure to declare the currency. The joint investigation continues between DEA and Dominica Police.

-- 1/19/2009: Dominica Police executed a search warrant which resulted in the seizure of 1506 pounds of marijuana at a residence in Dominica. An arrest warrant has been issued for the owner of the property.

-- 3/8/2009: A departing passenger bound for St. Maarten was arrested prior to boarding a flight and found to be in possession of 1 kilogram of cocaine concealed on his person.

-- 3/11/2009: Dominica Police and a Marine Unit seized a small fishing vessel containing 28 kilograms of cocaine and 472 kilograms of marijuana. The occupants of the vessel fled to shore and escaped prior to a police response. Authorities also seized a Toyota pick-up truck and 18 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition abandoned at the scene.

GRENADA:

-- 2/3/2009: Grenada Police Drug Squad and the Financial Intelligence Unit seized \$68,000 US from a Trinidadian National female courier, as she attempted to board a vessel from Grenada to Trinidad. The defendant subsequently pled guilty to possession of narcotics proceeds and was fined \$10,000 EC. The \$68,000 US was confiscated by the Grenadian Government.

-- 4/10/2009: The local DEA office coordinated with Grenada Police to locate a Trinidadian subject residing in Grenada who was subject to a provisional arrest warrant based on a DEA New York case. Grenada Police located and deported the individual back to Trinidad where he was arrested by Trinidadian law enforcement authorities for extradition to the United States.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS:

-- 1/28/2009: Members of the Police Drug Squad conducted marijuana eradication operations in the Cedar Grove area of St. Christopher. Approximately 8,217 marijuana plants were seized and one defendant was arrested within the marijuana field.

-- 2/3/2009: Members of the Police Drug Squad conducted marijuana eradication operations in the Needmust's area of St. Christopher. Approximately 11,482 marijuana plants were seized. The plants ranged in height from seedlings to 7 feet tall.

-- 5/7/2009: Members of the Police Drug Squad and Defense Forces conducted marijuana eradication operations in the Shadwell area on St Christopher. Approximately 1,327 marijuana plants were seized and one defendant was arrested at the location.

-- 5/8/2009: Members of the Police Drug Squad conducted marijuana eradication operations in the Challengers mountain area of St. Christopher. Approximately 1,082 marijuana plants were seized and one defendant was arrested at the location.

MARTINIQUE:

-- 2/9/2009: French Navy patrol boat intercepted a go fast in international waters approximately 60 miles north of Colombia and 86 miles northwest of Aruba. Pursuant to a boarding inspection, approximately 613 kilograms of cocaine was seized from the vessel and 6 crew members were transported to Martinique for prosecution. The local DEA office is assisting the French drug task force (OCTRIS) with exploitation of evidence and information gained from the arrest and statement of the 6 crew members.

ST. VINCENT:

-- 2/13/2009: St. Vincent Police Drug Squad members intercepted the arrival of a cargo vessel which runs between St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. A passenger was questioned, searched and as a result arrested after being found in possession of 1 kilogram of cocaine.

-- 2/20/2009: St. Vincent Police Drug Squad intercepted a vessel on arrival from Barbados via the Grenadines. Three taped brown packages containing currency, \$78,000.00 Barbados and \$3,000 USD was seized as a result.

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-- 4/25/2009: Based on a joint investigation between the local DEA, the British Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA), St. Vincent Police and St. Vincent Financial Intelligence Unit and the Royal British Virgin Islands Police three suspects were arrested in St. Vincent for extradition to the BVI for the seizure of 59 kilograms of cocaine in the BVI on 1/8/2008.

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA:

-- 3/2/2009: The Antigua Office of National Money Laundering and Drug Control Policy (ONDPC) seized 859.5 pounds of marijuana in Antigua and arrested 5 individuals.

-- 3/7/2009: Antigua Police and Drug Squad eradicated approximately 2,000 marijuana plants in the Sanderson Estate are of Antigua and seized approximately 33.5 pounds of processed marijuana. Two suspects were arrested at the scene.

-- 3/21/2009: Antigua Police Drug Squad received information concerning a vessel on its way to Antigua with a large sum of cash to purchase cocaine. The investigation resulted in a search warrant that found 1 kilogram of cocaine, 256 grams of marijuana and \$52,000.00 USD. A total of 5 suspects were arrested.

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JIATFS SURGE OPERATIONS  
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¶3. (SBU) From 1/28/09 to 1/30/09, The Embassy DEA office was instrumental in establishing and providing logistical support for combined air operation between the RSS Air Wing and JIATF-S to detect, sort, monitor and hand off to interdiction assets target vessels suspected of illicit trafficking within RSS waters. DEA coordinated the flow of strategic intelligence to air/interdiction assets and a DEA Agent flew aerial surveillance missions with the RSS.

¶4. (SBU) From 2/2 to 2/19, The Embassy DEA office provided intelligence and logistical support to JIATF-S, French CTG 4.6, RSS Air Wing and other US Military air/marine assets deployed in the region pursuant to a French led surge operation to increase the amount of detection/interdiction assets in the region to disrupt and deter maritime trafficking.

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TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE  
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¶5. (SBU) The following is a breakdown of ongoing training being provided in the region:

¶6. (SBU) NAS FUNDED:

-- RSS Basic Course (Barbados and St. Vincent) 1/19 - 4/16/2009: 37 Officers trained

-- Drug Commander Conference (St. Kitts): 3/16 - 3/20/09: 18 Officers trained

-- Offshore Alert Financial Due Diligence Conference (Miami): 4/26 - 4/28/09: 1 Officer trained

-- DEA Drug Unit Commanders Course (Quantico, VA) 5/11 - 5/22/09: 1 Officer trained

¶7. (SBU) INL FUNDED:

-- DARE Regional Conference (Barbados): 4/20 - 5/9/09: 27 Officers trained

¶8. (SBU) U.S. MILITARY FUNDED (MLO/DOD):

-- During the months of January and March of 2009, the MLO Office facilitated the visit of the U.S. Navy Ship HSV 2, the Swift. The crew of the Swift provided training in numerous disciplines to include Small Boat Maintenance/Repair; Basic/Intermediate Coxswain; Armed Sentry; Marksmanship training and Port Security. A total of 236 personnel from region were trained during the visits of January and March of 2009. In addition the MLO coordinated an Intelligence Seminar in Grenada sponsored by the State Partnership with the State of Florida which trained approximately 40 personnel. In addition, the MLO recently signed an MOU with the JIATFS and the RSS to fund approximately 25 flying hours per month for the RSS air wing at a cost of \$175,000 for the remainder of this year which will allow the RSS to provide dedicated flight hours for JIATFS.

¶9. (SBU) LEGAT (FBI) FUNDED:

-- At the Drug Commanders Conference in St. Kitts in March of 2009, BRIDGETOWN 00000339 004 OF 004

the Legat office provided a speaker from FBI Headquarters to present a large block of instruction on gang identification and investigations. The training was vital to the region and well received. In May of 2009, the Legat Office arranged for 12 alumni of the FBI National Academy in the region to attend the Latin American Chapter of the National Academy Graduate training conference in Brazil.

-- During the month of April the Legat Office coordinated the deployment of an FBI evidence response team from Miami to process a kidnapping crime scene in St. Kitts. Evidence was processed and forwarded to the FBI lab in Quantico. St. Kitts made the request

for assistance based on their inability and lack of expertise in proper evidence gathering at the scene of serious crimes.

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NAS TRAVEL AND ACTIVITIES  
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¶10. (SBU) During the period of January through May of 2009, the following travel and activities were performed by the NAS Office at post:

-- Travel to all seven island nations in the Embassy area of operation to perform end use monitoring of INL assets in the Region performed in January of 2009.

-- Introductory meetings at Department of State with WHA and INL in February of 2009

-- NAS was a presenter as well as a participant in the Drug Unit Commanders Course and Pre-IDEC meetings in St. Kitts in March of ¶2009.

-- JIATFS Planning Meetings in Key West, Florida in April of 2009. In conjunction with this Meeting NAS also participated in numerous meetings with HQS INL personnel and fellow NAS personnel from throughout the WHA area.

-- Caribbean Financial Action Task Force Plenary in Trinidad in May of 2009. NAS participated as part of the U.S. delegation to this meeting.

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OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT NEWS  
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¶11. (SBU) On March 31, the Charge hosted a signing ceremony for the eTrace Memorandum of Understanding in Bridgetown. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Deputy Assistant Director Julie Torres signed the MOU that will provide eTrace, an electronic system used to trace illicit firearms, to several Caribbean Community (CARICOM) police commissioners and police officials from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Barbados, Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, and St. Lucia. This is an ongoing effort to combat firearms trafficking in the region consistent with the December 2007, joint CARICOM-U.S. Initiative on Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons and Ammunition. Since the signing, Guyana has also entered into the MOU during May of 2009.

¶12. (SBU) During March of 2009, local news outlets reported that Dominica had received a new patrol boat to combat trafficking in persons and drugs. Post has determined that the boat is a 40-foot "Sea Ark" vessel and was financed by the Government of Venezuela.

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